BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
Exchange Student Handbook
CHECKLIST

BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

☐ Apply for a J-1 visa from local US Embassy or Consulate.

☐ Make travel plans for arrival and departure from Brandeis University. Please do not book flights before confirming arrival dates with the Office of Study Abroad at Brandeis.

☐ Complete the Medical Report form prior to leaving and bring completed form to Brandeis University.

☐ Create your Brandeis e-mail account.

☐ Watch the online orientation from the International Students and Scholars Office.

☐ Attend the virtual pre-departure meeting.

AT BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

☐ Check in with the Office of Study Abroad in Usdan 169. We’ll connect you with the Department of Community Living to pick up keys and get housing assignment. A campus map is included in this handbook and you’ll receive other arrival information via e-mail.

☐ Attend orientation. Dates and locations will be sent to you prior to arrival. Attending orientation is mandatory—please book flights accordingly. Get your campus ID card.

☐ Make an appointment with the Health Center to review your medical forms. To make an appointment, please call (781) 736-3677.

☐ Complete your check-in with the International Students and Scholars Office.
INTRODUCTION

We are excited to welcome you to Brandeis University!

ABOUT BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Brandeis University is a community of scholars and students united by their commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and its transmission from generation to generation. As a research university, Brandeis is dedicated to the advancement of the humanities, arts and social, natural and physical sciences. As a liberal arts college, Brandeis affirms the importance of a broad and critical education in enriching the lives of students and preparing them for full participation in a changing society, capable of promoting their own welfare, yet remaining deeply concerned about the welfare of others.

Brandeis was founded in 1948 and is located in Waltham, Massachusetts, approximately 10 miles outside of Boston, Massachusetts. 3,635 undergraduates attend Brandeis and 21% of the student population is comprised of international students.

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD

The Office of Study Abroad, located in Usdan 169, is your primary contact while studying at Brandeis University. The exchange program that brought you here in administered jointly between the Office of Study Abroad and a comparable office at your home institution. In addition to admitting you to Brandeis University, we pre-register you for courses, assist with housing, and help with logistical support. Please feel free to come to us with any questions or problems before, during, or after your semester or year at Brandeis University.
ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND SCHOLARS OFFICE

The International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO) is responsible for issuing the immigration documents required for international students to apply for a student visa. They also issue work authorization and advise on other issues related to maintaining legal status in the United States. The ISSO organizes a mandatory International Student Orientation each semester. In addition to these important services, the ISSO sponsors programs for international students throughout the year.
BEFORE LEAVING

OBTAINING A STUDENT VISA

As a participant of an exchange program to Brandeis University, you will most likely be entering the United States on a J-1 exchange visitor visa. The Office of International Students and Scholars will send you information on how to apply for your visa. Please follow these instructions very carefully.

Find updated information on how to obtain a student visa.

TRAVEL PLANS

As an exchange student, it is your responsibility to arrange for your arrival to and departure from the United States.

You should plan to arrive on campus on Saturday, January 6, 2018 between 9am and 5pm to move into your residence hall. Orientation starts Sunday, January 7, 2018. Any arrival before this time will be on your own and your residence hall will not be available before January 6, 2018. Please be aware that the following immigration regulations are in effect for all J-1 students:

- New international students will not be permitted to enter the US more than 30 days before the start date of their program as indicated on the DS-2019 form.
- Upon completion of studies (i.e. the end date listed on the DS-2019), J-1 students are permitted to remain in the US for 30 days.

You will need to vacate your residence hall by 12pm noon on Friday, May 8, 2017.

MEDICAL INSURANCE

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires all full-time students (both American and international) attending colleges and universities in Massachusetts to subscribe to a US-based insurance plan. You will be enrolled in and billed for the Brandeis University medical insurance upon your admission to the university.

Additionally, you are required to complete the Medical Report Form found in your online application account prior to leaving your home country. Please have this form completed by a doctor in your home country and then upon arriving on campus, make an appointment with the Brandeis University Health Center to review your forms.
WHAT TO BRING

Documents

- Medical and dental records, including certificates of immunizations and vaccinations and your Medical Report Form

- Information about medical conditions or treatments, prescriptions for medication (including generic and brand names), spare eyeglasses and a prescription.

- International driver’s license

Wherever applicable, these documents should be accompanied by official English translations.

Linens

Bring a sheet and towel for the first few days at Brandeis; sheets in the United States come in standard sizes to fit the beds. Purchase extra-long twin sheets if you are living in the residence halls. If you are not bringing linens or comforters with us, you should purchase and ship them in advance. One option is to buy your essentials online from the "Shop for College" section in the Bed Bath and Beyond website.

Have any purchased items shipped to:
Attention: Alisha Cardwell
Office of Study Abroad
415 South Street MS 073
Waltham, MA 02454
Please alert Alisha at acardwel@brandeis.edu if you have shipped something. It is recommended that you place any orders before December 20, 2018 to arrive in time.

Clothing
Students at Brandeis dress very informally: jeans, shorts, t-shirts, casual shirts, etc. Nevertheless, there will be some occasions for you to dress up, such as semi-formal and formal dances or special events with the faculty. Traditional dress is always welcome. You will need plenty of warm clothing for the winter: sweaters, fleeces and/or sweatshirts, and a winter coat are essential. Heavy, waterproof shoes/ snow boots, gloves, a hat and scarf for snow will also be necessary, as will be an umbrella for rainy days.

Temperature averages for Boston are:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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<tr>
<td>January</td>
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<td>February</td>
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<td>September</td>
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<td>November</td>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
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Conversions and General Measurements

Clothing sizes in the U.S. can vary. Be sure to try on any clothing or shoes before you buy them. Be advised that high-quality winter jackets can be quite expensive, but we recommend that you purchase it after arrival, to make sure that it is warm enough. Some popular brands for winter jackets are Patagonia and North Face.

Books and Supplies

Books are very expensive in the United States -- a semester’s worth of books for an undergraduate is typically around $500.00. You should probably bring along books (dictionaries, reference material) that you use often, or know you will need. Students recommend “renting” books from sites or purchasing books from other students at mybrandeis.edu. We strongly suggest you consider buying used copies through sources like the Brandeis Bookstore, Amazon.com, Cheapbooks, Barnes and Noble, or eBay since they are less expensive than new books. You might also like to bring some books in languages other than English, which are harder to come by in the United States. Most students will wait to purchase books until their course schedule is solidified.

Electrical Devices
The standard electrical output in the U.S. is 110V/220V, so most foreign electrical equipment cannot be used here. Bring electrical devices only if you will run them on batteries or a voltage converter. Other items may be purchases within the first few days of arriving.
ACADEMICS

BRANDEIS E-MAIL, SAGE, AND LATTE ACCESS

As an exchange student at Brandeis University, you will create a Brandeis e-mail account. This e-mail account is what faculty, staff, and other students across campus will use to communicate with you so check is regularly. You will also have access to Sage and Latte, which will contain your financial information (bills, etc.) and your course information.

E-mail

To create a Brandeis e-mail account, follow these steps:

1. Go to https://identity.brandeis.edu/identity/index
2. Click on the link that reads “Create an official staff/faculty/student account"
3. Type in your information, and check off "Yes" to the question "Are you an incoming student?"
4. Enter your Sage ID number, which was sent to you by email
5. Hit "Submit" and your account has been created
6. The UNET login name and password will allow you to access sage (where you will find future billing information) and LATTE (where you will access course materials). Please note that your UNet ID is your Brandeis email address minus the @brandeis.edu.

If at any time, you forget your UNet Password, go to https://unet.brandeis.edu/cgi-bin/forgot-password. The UNet Help Desk number is 781-736-7782. To access your Brandeis e-mail account at any time, visit login.brandeis.edu.

Sage

Sage gives you access to view your financial documents and add or drop classes, among other things.

Log in using your UNet ID and UNet Password.

- Press the 'Sign In' button.
- The Student Center page will open.

When using sage do not use the back button. Use the page navigation tools or breadcrumbs instead. To ensure account security, logout and quit your browser when you finish your Sage transactions.

In Sage, you are encouraged to assign a sage Proxy account to any person (parent, spouse, etc.) who has some responsibility for making payments to the student account. You may create a
**Proxy account** via the “Add / Delete Proxy” link in the “Personal Information” section of your Student Center in sage.

**LATTE**

Many professors use **LATTE** to store course information, so you can expect to use it in your classes.

- Log in using your UNet ID and UNet password.
- Press the 'Log into Latte' image.
- The Student Center page will open.

**Need Assistance?**

*If you have any trouble setting up your UNet account or have questions, please contact Alisha Cardwell (acardwel@brandeis.edu) so she can help you troubleshoot.*

**ENROLLING IN OR CHANGING CLASSES**

Prior to arrival, the Office of Study Abroad will register you for the classes you requested on your application. Please keep in mind that you must be flexible about what courses you will take. We cannot guarantee that you will get all of the classes you request as some classes have restrictions and size limitations. If you need to make any alterations to the courses you selected on your application, please e-mail the Office of Study Abroad.

**Add/Drop**

The first weeks of classes at the beginning of each semester is called the Add/Drop or “Shopping” period. During this time, you can make changes to your course schedule, adding or dropping courses as needed. Don’t worry if you do not have all of the courses that you need by the time classes start. You will have this period of time to make adjustments to your course schedule. Please contact the Office of Study Abroad if you would like to make any changes to your schedule during this time. You will not be able to make changes through Sage.

**TRANSCRIPT OF ACADEMIC WORK**

At the end of your time at Brandeis University, an official transcript of the academic work you completed will be sent to your home university. Before the Office of Study Abroad can release your transcript to your home university, however, you must clear any outstanding debts to Brandeis University that you may have.
TUTORING SERVICES AND WRITING CENTER

The academic system in the US differs from other countries. You may spend more time in class than you would at home, and Brandeis professors often include class attendance as part of your final grade. Students are usually expected to complete a variety of assignments and are assessed throughout the semester. Students often participate actively in class discussions.

If you find yourself struggling, there are tutoring resources available to you. Brandeis Undergraduate Group Study (BUGS) is a program open to all undergraduates. Trained facilitators run small group sessions to go over course material and help prepare for exams. Group Study Leaders are undergraduates who have successfully completed the relevant course(s), are recommended by faculty, and have been trained by Academic Services.

Additionally, writing lengthy papers can be challenging, especially if English is your second language. The Brandeis Writing Center offers free writing tutorial services to all students. You can reserve appointments in advance or even schedule a weekly tutorial.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Please note that as an exchange student at Brandeis University, you must abide by Brandeis’ academic integrity policy and rights and responsibilities.
YOUR FIRST DAYS IN THE U.S.

ARRIVING INTO THE U.S.

Upon arrival to the U.S., individuals will be asked by a U.S. Immigration Inspector to present the following:

- Passport with valid J-1 U.S. Entry Visa
- Appropriate Financial Documentation
- Brandeis Admission Letter and financial aid letter (if any)
- Certificate of Eligibility Form DS-2019

Always carry these documents on your person. Do NOT pack them in your checked luggage, as you must show your documents to the CBP officer before you are allowed to claim your luggage. The CBP officer may ask similar questions to those asked during the visa interview. Individuals should also be prepared to have their photo and index fingerprints digitally taken as part of the entry process.

If you do not have proper documentation upon arrival, the CBP officer may either deny your entrance to the U.S. or grant you a temporary 30-day entry as noted with a Form I-515A.

Please contact the ISSO immediately in case of any difficulties entering the United States or if you are issued a Form I-515A.

GETTING TO BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Below are some of your options to get to Brandeis once you arrive in Boston. Google maps works well in Boston and is very helpful in navigating transportation.

Air Porter

Air Porter is a year-round shared van service that is a convenient way for getting to Brandeis from the airport. It costs about $39.00 for a one-way student fare to Brandeis. They will need your flight information, and a credit card number to make a reservation.

Taxicab
A taxi to Brandeis from the Logan International Airport costs at least $60.00. There will be taxis easily available at the airport. Within Waltham, you can use Checker Cab of Waltham at 781-647-TAXI. ATMs are also available at the airport to withdraw cash needed for a taxi.

**Public Transportation**

You can utilize public transportation to get to Brandeis University. The subway is known locally at the “T”. For more information consult the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority.

From the airport, walk out of baggage claim and take Silver Line to South Station. At South Station, switch to the Red Line toward Alewife. You’ll then get off at Porter Square Station where you’ll switch to the Commuter Rail. You’ll want the Commuter Rail going to Fitchburg ([check the schedules](#)). You’ll get off at the Brandeis/Roberts stop and then make your way onto campus.

You can purchase a “T” pass at Airport Station and a ticket for the Commuter Rail must be paid for in cash on the train, so please have U.S. dollars available.

![Train at station](image)

**Arriving by Car**

Brandeis is located just 10 miles from Boston and is within easy driving distance of the region's major cities.

*Please let us know how you intend to arrive to campus. When you first arrive, please come to the Office of Study Abroad in Usdan 169. Please see the attached campus map for directions.*

**ON-CAMPUS HOUSING**

Brandeis University has a number of residence halls across campus. As an international exchange student, you’ll most likely live in the Ziv residence hall or Charles River apartments with a possible mix of international and American upper-classman suitemates.
Rooms

- Typically, five to six person suites, each containing six single bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a common space. Individual bedrooms range in size from approximately 80 to 100 square feet.
- Suite make up can vary.

All residence halls and academic buildings have access to free wireless internet access. Please be aware that sheets, blankets, pillows, towels, etc. are not provided in the residence halls. Please see the above section on what to bring for more information. You’ll also have a Community Advisor (CA), an undergraduate student who is your residence hall point person if you need anything—from someone to just talk to or someone to notify in emergency situations. Additionally, the Area Coordinator, is a full-time staff person available to help you in any situation. Not all residence halls have air conditioning and students are responsible for cleaning their space.

ON-CAMPUS MEAL PLAN

As a student residing on campus, you are required to purchase a meal plan. You can opt to change your meal plan once arriving on campus, but must pay in advance of arrival. Many previous exchange students opted for the 80 Block Meal Plan. Dining halls range from a-la-carte to buffet style. Please inform Alisha Cardwell at acardwel@brandeis.edu if you have any food restrictions that must be kept.

Read information about meal plans options.

CHECKING IN AND ORIENTATION

Upon arrival, please proceed first to the Office of Study Abroad in the Usdan Student Center, Room 169. Please see the attached campus map for directions. We will direct you to your residence hall.

Orientation begins January 7, 2018. You are expected to participate in all of the mandatory orientation activities, including the ISSO session for international students. A full orientation schedule will be given to you.

RECEIVING MAIL
Your address to receive mail is:

Attention: Your Name
415 South Street, MS 073
Office of Study Abroad
Waltham, MA 02454

The Office of Study Abroad will then alert you whenever you have mail delivered.

RESOURCES AND WAYS TO BE INVOLVED ON CAMPUS

As an international semester exchange student, you’ll have access to all of the same resources and activities as undergraduate students. Brandeis University has many resources available to students and different ways to be involved on campus.

Student Clubs & Events

Brandeis has more than 250 student-run clubs and organizations, including service organizations, cultural awareness groups, performing groups, spiritual and religious groups, sports and games clubs, student leadership and activism groups, student publications, a television station (BTV) and a radio station (WBRS).

If you are on campus for the fall semester, you’ll be able to experience:
- Fall Fest
- International Education Week
- Louis Louis Week
If you are on campus for the spring semester, you can experience:
-Spring Fest
-Festival of the Arts
-DEIS Impact
-Culture X

**Gossman Sports Center**

The [Gosman Sports Center](#) is open every day of the week and has an indoor pool, tennis and basketball courts, weight room, exercise equipment, and more.

**Spiritual Life**

The [chaplains of Brandeis University](#) warmly welcome you to the Brandeis community. As Jewish, Christian and Muslim leaders, we welcome students of all faiths.

Brandeis encourages and supports all expressions of spiritual and religious life on campus. The university’s three chapels — the Berlin Chapel (Jewish), the Bethlehem Chapel (Catholic) and the Harlan Chapel (Protestant) — serve as the focal point of spiritual and religious activity on campus. In addition, a Muslim prayer room and resource center are located in the Usdan Student Center.

**Brandeis Bookstore and Library**

The [on-campus bookstore](#) is the place where you can buy collegiate clothing, gifts, books and all class materials.

As an international exchange student, you’ll also have access to check out books at the Goldfarb and Farber Libraries. The library houses borrowing services, equipment loan, research help, library collections, the Getz Multimedia Lab, Academic Computing, the Technology Help Desk, classrooms, Archives & Special Collections, and other services.

**Brandeis Counseling Center**

Some students find adjusting to a new culture and new academic environment very challenging. The Brandeis Counseling Center provides counseling for students in times of stress, and encourages them to ask for help with their most immediate concerns. Our staff is experienced in dealing with deeper developmental and psychological issues ranging from stress and depression to substance abuse and eating disorders.

All concerns are addressed with sensitivity to and respect for diversity and individuality. We maintain the strictest standards of privacy and confidentiality, and serve as a resource to the
entire Brandeis community. If you need to schedule an appointment, please call 781-736-3730 or e-mail bcc@brandeis.edu.

Orientation

Orientation is designed to help you meet other students on campus and know what resources and groups are available to you during the semester. Take advantage of the information and find ways to get involved!

OFF-CAMPUS EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

View off-campus theaters, restaurants, museums, music and more in Waltham and beyond. Find more information about Waltham, MA.


CAMPUS CONTACTS

Office of Study Abroad
Usdan 169
(781) 736-3483
abroad@brandeis.edu

International Students and Scholars Office (ISSO)
Kutz 215
(781) 736-3480
 isso@brandeis.edu

University Police
(781) 736-3333

Waltham Police
Dial 911
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Should I open a U.S. bank account?

Dealing with a new currency and cost of living is never easy. Many students and scholars find themselves converting dollar prices into their own currency (and are shocked at the results) when buying inexpensive, everyday items. It can be hard to get a sense of what Americans consider expensive. It makes sense, therefore, to make your initial purchases in the company of experienced international or American peers. Soon you will be thinking in dollars!

We recommend that you carry at least $500 in cash for arrival and travel in the U.S. Changing money in your home country may be less expensive than exchanging money upon arrival. Remember that the budget estimates provided to you by your school/department are only estimates. Your actual costs may be significantly higher (or lower), depending on the lifestyle you choose. It is very important to realize that your financial situation will not change substantially once you arrive. Make sure that you can afford to pay your fees and have sufficient funds for living expenses before you leave home. For undergraduate students, excellent academic work will not result in increased financial aid at Brandeis, and the money you make working on-campus should be thought of as incidental rather than a significant contribution to your educational or living expenses.

While not necessary unless you obtain an on-campus job, you may want to open a U.S. bank account. Visit any local bank to do so. You do not need a social security number to open an account.

How should I make calls from the U.S.?

Students typically choose to buy a cell-phone. Some companies require customers to have a social security number in order to provide cellular service; some others like University Mobile do not. Be aware that if you lack credit history in the United States, some companies may require that you make an initial deposit that will be returned to you a year after you first signed your contract.

Mobile/Cellular Phones:
A popular option is to buy a cell phone. For more information check AT&T, Verizon Wireless, T-Mobile or Sprint to figure out which carrier best fits your needs. You may want to check with students who have been here for recommendations regarding coverage, plans and benefits.
Local, Long-Distance and International Calls:
All phone numbers in the United States consist of a three-digit area code followed by a seven-digit number. The area code for Waltham is 781. To make a local call (i.e. with the same area code) dial the area code and the seven-digit number. Local calls are normally not billed, or are inexpensive. To dial long-distance within the U.S., dial 1 + area code + seven-digit number. Numbers with an 800, 888 or 866 area code are normally toll-free.

To make an international call, you must dial 011 first to get outside the U.S. + country code + city code + number you are calling. Long-distance and international calls are often quite expensive, so make sure you know the rates before you dial. Many international students are often shocked and surprised by their first phone bills. To reduce costs, we strongly recommend using a calling card when calling internationally.

One way to reduce costs is to call using a phone card.

Some phone cards send monthly bills, while others deduct the cost of phone calls from an initial deposit made by you until the deposit runs out. You can buy these cards anywhere in the U.S., online (at places such as Calling Card.com) but your best bet would be to talk to someone from your home country, or explore the internet to see which company will work the best in your case. Try Hello College or Skype to compare rates.

You can also look up companies like Cellhire.com who provide SIM cards at no contract and set rates.

Can I work while in the US, either on or off campus?
Unfortunately, as a J-1 international student, you cannot work on or off campus.